REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1-4, 7, 9-11, 25-27 and 29-30 are considered in the Office action.

Claims 29, 30, 2, 9 and 27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Saruta et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,533,383 ("Saruta").

Claim 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Saruta and Seino et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,361,138 ("Seino").

Claims 3, 10, 11, 25 and 26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Saruta in view of Haines et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,808,255 ("Haines").

Claim 4 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Saruta in view of Trafton et al. U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0043243 ("Trafton").

Claims 7 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Saruta in view of Yoshimura et al. U.S. Patent No. 6,019,461 ("Yoshimura").

Reply

Applicants have amended claims 29 and 30 to more particularly recite and distinctly claim the invention. Amended claim 29 recites a printing system that includes a plurality of ink containers, each ink container including an ink and an associated tag, each tag including rewritable data that identifies the manufacturing date of the associated ink and a reader/writer adapted to read data from an identified tag and to write the manufacturing date of the associated ink to the identified tag. Amended claim 30 recites a method for use with a printing system that comprises a plurality of ink containers, the method including providing a plurality of tags, uniquely associating each tag with a corresponding one of the containers, each tag including rewritable data that identifies the manufacturing date of the associated ink, and using a reader/writer to read data from an identified tag and to write the manufacturing date of the associated ink to the identified tag. Support for the claim amendments may be found at least at page 8, lines 6-8, page 9, lines 1-5 and 20-22, and page 10, lines 3-7.

None of the cited references, alone or combined, describe or suggest the claimed invention. In particular, Saruta describes one embodiment of a printing apparatus that includes ink cartridges 1 and 2, memory devices 27 and 32 storing

information relating to ink contained in the ink cartridges 1 and 2, and a control means 46 for reading data from and writing data in memory devices 27 and 32. (Col. 3, lines 37-48). The information stored in the memory devices 27 and 32 includes a date code of manufacture of the ink. (Col. 7, lines 47-52). Saruta also describes another embodiment of a printing apparatus that includes an ink cartridges 111, EEPROM 113 for storing information relating to ink contained in the ink cartridge 111, and a CPU 131 for reading data from and writing data in EEPROM 113. (Col. 12, line 17 through Col. 13, line 52).

Saruta states that control means 46 writes various data to memory devices 27 and 32. In particular, Saruta states that control means 46 writes data regarding the amount of consumed ink, the amount of residual ink, current date and time codes, a date/time code indicating when the ink was mounted to the printing apparatus, print quantity, number of cleaning times, and cleaning frequency. (Col. 4, lines 6-15; Col. 5, lines 25-26; Col. 8, line 66 through Col. 9, line 3; Col. 9, lines 36-42; Col. 9, lines 52-59; Col. 10, lines 12-16; Col. 10, lines 36-40; Col. 10, lines 47-53; Col. 10, line 63 through Col. 11, line 6). In addition, Saruta states that CPU 131 writes data to EEPROM 113 regarding the amount of consumed ink, the amount of residual ink, and the amount of time that the cartridge has been mounted on the printing apparatus. (Col. 15, lines 16-20; Col. 15, lines 38-43; Col. 15, lines 60-63).

Significantly, however, Saruta nowhere describes or suggests that control means 46 or CPU 131 write the manufacturing date of the associated ink to an identified tag. This is not surprising, as such data typically would be recorded by the ink cartridge manufacturer, and would not be re-writeable by the printing device. Indeed, because prior art printing devices typically use the stored manufacturing date to determine whether a particular ink cartridges can be used, prior art printing devices typically do not permit such data to be modified once the cartridge leaves the manufacturer.

Unlike prior art printing devices, however, the claimed printing system includes a reader/writer adapted to read data from an identified tag and to write the manufacturing date of the associated ink to the identified tag. Saruta does not describe or suggest such a printing system. Instead, Saruta points away from the claimed invention by expressly stating that control means 46 and CPU 131 can write numerous data to memory devices 27, 32 and 113, none of which include manufacturing date data.

Because Saruta does not describe the claimed invention, and in fact expressly points away from it, applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 29 and 30 are allowable. Further, because 1, 3, 4, 7, 9-11 depend from claim 29, and claims 25-27 depend from claim 30, applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 9-11 and 25-27 are also allowable.

Conclusion

For the reasons stated above, applicants submit that this application, including claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 9-11, 25-27 and 29-30, is allowable. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner allow this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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